Summary of Alexander Galloway’s “New Media”

Galloway earned his PhD right when Manovich’s “New Media” was published. Galloway argues the “New Media” is a product of the widespread adoption of the internet. “What is New Media” written 10 years after Manovich’s “Language of New Media” and is rooted in Web 1.0. While Manovich’s layers - appearance, material, and logic- form a recursive mise en abime, Galloway finds Manovich’s approach as being poetic and aesthetic. Galloway gives special mention to manovich’s 5 principles are aesthetic properties of the data underlying the representations made possible by that data. The numbers have a beauty that we can talk about. Interaction between the computer and culture layer has a beauty in itself. Hardware, social interaction, and digital networks all are important considerations to illicit aesthetics. Weakness he identifies have to do with cinema and history.

Cinema is the first new media even though it predates first pc by 100 years. Manovich says default condition of the HCI while galloway says it’s too narrow. History of Manovich gives less focus to historical context or influence of media, but instead focused on the media as formal devices. In literary terms formal devices are the means used to tell a story. Media therefore, become formal devices instead of historical systems. Galloway offers a defense to Manovich’s glasnost of the digital media. Galloway says we should focus on politics and how the things work. Manovich talks about the appearance layer of new media being cinema.

The material layer of new media is digital technology. The logic layer is algorithmic. Galloway calls this a mise en abime - like a matryoshka doll (one thing contains another, which contains another). More formerly a mise en abime is infinite recursion. Simple recursion include acronyms. Galloway gives us- synecdoche - a part comes to stand for the whole.

Indexicality - a sign pointing to meaning within the context of a sentence

*Summarized by G. James Mitchell*

Galloway, A. R. (2011). What is new media?: ten years after the language of new media. Criticism, 53(3), 377-384. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/462193 (Off-campus link: http://muse.jhu.edu.citytech.ezproxy.cuny.edu/article/462193/pdf)